



TESTIMONY
HOUSE COMMERCE COMMITTEE
HB 4249

Chairperson Foster and Members of the Committee:

My name is Marjorie Mitchell, Executive Director of MichUHCAN. MichUHCAN is a non-profit education and advocacy organization on health care issues. We have been organized since 1990. I come to you today to, on behalf of my organization to strongly oppose HB 4249, which would prevent any local entity from adopting law that guarantees paid sick days.

Over the weekend, I spent some time reviewing the research on this issue – a large majority of these studies concur that paid sick days reduce the spread of disease and improve the health of a community. I recommend the Institute for Women’s Policy Research (IWPR) website as a good place to review this research as well as the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) website.

A 2009 briefing paper by IWPR reported that employees who attended work while infected with H1N1 caused an estimated 7 million other Americans to become infected with the disease.

The lack of access to Paid Sick Days reduces productivity of worker who must stay on their jobs or lose wages, they can ill afford to lose; spreads disease leading to more lost productivity and costs employers dollars for workers who must often lose more days if their disease worsens due to the inability to get the rest they need or to see a doctor. Lack of Paid sick Days also raises the cost of health care when sick employees must visit an Emergency Room in the evenings in order to see a doctor and get medication.

Americans approve of Paid Sick Days for all employees. In a survey funded by the Rockefeller Foundation in 2010, 69% of registered voter respondents endorsed Paid Sick Days.

None of us want to be served by a sick restaurant employee or have our children/parents cared for by sick individuals. Paid Sick Days should be a “no brainer”. They are good for workers, good for our community’s health, good for reducing health care costs and good for employers who would benefit from a more productive staff at a small cost. Let us learn from the large businesses in our state who have learned that most employees do not abuse their Paid Sick Day privileges. Indeed, many are left unused at the end of the year. For them, Paid Sick Days are good business!

Thank you for the opportunity to speak before you today.